



The Civic Society
for Reigate, Redhill and Merstham

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NEWSLETTER
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Chairman's notes - Tim Lee

As this is my first newsletter as chairman, I thought I would introduce myself and outline my thoughts on the future of the Reigate Society which I hope is looking a lot more promising.

I would firstly like to mention Michael and Bridget's monumental efforts over the last few years as acting Chair and Secretary. We should all be grateful for their persistence in carrying on their roles for as long as they did. A formal marking of our appreciation will be arranged when it is possible to do so again.

I have been the Chairman of the Architecture and Planning Committee of the Society for over two years and am a Chartered architect with my own local private practice. I have lived in Reigate since 2006 and as a family we have certainly enjoyed the area for many years. I agreed to take over from Michael Doughty as Chairman because I believe it is important for Reigate and Redhill to have an active civic society that is engaged in the topics that affect our towns. There was real concern in 2020 that this may not be the case moving into 2021 but I hope that with the help of you as members, the Council members and the Chairs of the various committees, we can continue the story of the Society. 2022 will mark the 75th anniversary of the society and it would be great to be able to celebrate that milestone having a renewed future proof constitution and outlook. I believe to secure its future the Society needs to be more relevant and in touch with all residents of the area and be actively involved in the conversations that are currently happening on social media and online particularly in the current climate with Covid 19. We have started to do this by introducing the live Zoom events which have been enjoyed by current members as well as non-members interested in the subjects we were discussing. As a result of these meetings a few more people have joined the membership which is great news and long may it continue.

We also need to tap into the knowledge base and expertise of current members as well as current corporate members to increase opportunities of collaboration with other groups, companies and individuals with like-minded views and aspirations. It has been an extremely hard time for us all in recent months due to Covid but continuing to be involved in matters in our towns, serving you as members and at the same time trying to reach a new and younger audience is the challenge we face.

I wish you all continued safety and renewed sense of hope moving forwards.

AGM and open meetings

We hope to hold our AGM in June with an annual report going out at around the same time and there will be three further open meetings either live on Zoom or at an actual venue dependant on successful release from lockdown. We have been able to hold several open meetings on Zoom to which we invited both members and anyone interested in the topic that had been chosen. The first meeting looking at the future of the Priory had a great response and the meetings since have received a healthy interest and attendance. Our open meetings are a great way of reaching the local community of Reigate and Redhill and potential new members by providing a forum to learn and discuss topical issues involving the history, culture and fabric of the area. We will be holding three more open meetings in 2021 and the program is listed later in this newsletter. Please take a look and if anything interests you, we will be sending out invitations using Eventbrite nearer the time.

Secretary's Notes – Jane Artis

Programme of meetings

Monday May 17th at 7.30 pm – The London Green Belt Council Zoom Meeting

June date to be confirmed - Annual General Meeting

Monday September 13th at 7.30 pm – Redhill, Past Present and Future Zoom Meeting

Monday November 8th at 7.30 pm – Topic to be confirmed

Treasurer's Notes – Robert Bogin

The final accounts for 2020-2021 show a good level of net income. The level of expenses was greatly reduced due to no hall hire and speaker costs and much reduced printing costs. The balance of Society funds is at a satisfactory level although there is a potential large cost of renovation of the statue in Priory Park which has been badly damaged by frost and vandalism. There is no cost for insurance which was renewed in early April and should therefore be included in 2021-2022 account. Subscription income for the year 2020-2021 was £468 less than 2019-2020. £798 of subscriptions for 2021-2022 have been received.

Registrar's Notes – Robert Bogin

The number of members stands at 466 comprising 148 single memberships, 144 family memberships, 21 corporate and 8 others. Thus total of 321 memberships.

23 memberships representing 33 members have not yet paid their 2020-2021 subscriptions to date despite reminders. This includes 2 Corporate members.

These members will be removed from the database before the end of June if no payment is received. Of the 321 memberships, 199 receive their Newsletters by email. 52 are posted and 79 by hand delivery (at present time also posted). For the mathematicians among you, some corporate members receive a Newsletter by post and by email.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Architecture and Planning Committee - Tim Lee

Planning applications

The Architecture and Planning Committee have continued to meet via Zoom to discuss architecture and planning related issues and current planning applications in the area. While we are still restricted in meeting in person we will continue on Zoom.

The ongoing change to the High Street and Church Street rolls on with several applications for changes to shopfront signage. The former Martin's newsagent unit has been subject to a couple of change of use applications from retail to restaurant/ café. The owners applied for a change of use to the pavement area directly outside the unit which was objected to by the APC due to the fact that this would cause obstruction to pedestrians and refused by the council for the same reason. The installation of a replacement shopfront has been refused but an application for a new fascia signage has been given express consent under permitted development. The old Natwest building, which has been vacant since the bank left in June 2018 was subject to a change of use application under permitted development from financial and professional services to restaurant/ café use and it is reported that a café chain will be moving in soon. The building is believed to be owned by property development company 254 WPR Limited.

The planning application that has created the biggest local interest is the proposal to build a new crematorium which is still to be considered at planning committee soon. The APC commented on the advantages and disadvantages of the development which it is feared will ultimately create extra traffic flow affecting the local roads and the junction at Woodhatch. The comments from the members of the Reigate Society were also sent to the council outlining principles of the development as well as issues that would affect the planning application.

Architecture and Planning Committee (continued)

Planning applications (continued)

Recently there has been an outline planning application for a development on green belt land at Sandcross Lane in Reigate. This area of land was set out in the DMP that was adopted in 2019 as developable land but we trust that the council has designated other areas where the green belt will either be extended or protected strongly. The Yew Tree Public House on Reigate hill is currently subject to a change of use from public house to flats in a development which looks to protect the outside appearance and architectural features of the building which is good. The Barons building on the end of Church Street is also subject to a change of use from retail to offices. It has been vacant for a while now following the departure of Jack Wills and it remains to be seen if it filled as office use by the owners.

Conservation Area Consultations

Members of the APC and Pippa Martin, Chair of the Redhill Committee have been involved in several consultation zoom calls with John McNally to discuss the appraisals for all the Conservation areas in Reigate, Redhill and Merstham. These were good and useful virtual meetings during which we were able to discuss with John other heritage buildings such as St Matthew's Church in Redhill and the Priory and Stables site in Reigate. Thank you to those that contributed and it is good that we are able to keep good links with Reigate and Banstead Council through John.

Government white paper and changes to permitted development

The APC have attended a couple of the Zoom seminars that Civic voice have hosted to discuss the new government white paper on planning changes. Part of the proposals by the government seem to be offering developers an easier route to development of sites without the need for full planning applications. Since 1 September 2020, the Use Classes, A1/2/3 & B1 have been treated as Class E meaning more uses can fall under the same use entitled Commercial, Business and Service. Permanent permitted development rights have also been loosened. This means certain use classes can change uses (for example a retail unit can be changed to a flat) subject to prior approval. It remains to be seen what impact this will have on our high streets moving forwards.

The Priory and Stables site

With the Priory school due to move to a new purpose-built school on the old Canon site in 2023, the Priory building will be left with an uncertain future in terms of future use, ownership and funding unless those involved can form decisions and come to agreements on what will happen and who will do it. We held our first live Zoom event at the end of 2020 to reflect on the history of the building and shed some light on ideas for the future with a positive response for further discussion going forwards. I believe the society needs to continue to be a part of brokering these discussions between Surrey County Council and Reigate and Banstead Borough Council while taking ideas of similar buildings that have undergone similar experiences such as Pippbrook House and Fetcham Park House. I have received a few offers from local professionals that have strong links with the town willing to help in this respect.

The Reigate Society sculpture

Unfortunately, the Reigate Society sculpture has suffered a lot of damage over the last couple of years and is almost non-repairable without spending a large amount of money. Gwyther Joyce, a member of the APC has been working very hard in looking at various options going forward. The problem we have is removing the sculpture from the brick plinth which requires permanently cutting the thick fixing bolts causing damage to the sculpture and plinth. Once detached the sculpture can be taken into storage so it is away from the elements until we decide a course of action.

The Civic Awards 2022

Unfortunately, due to ongoing Covid 19 restrictions the Civic Awards have been on hold for the last year or so. The plan is for them to return in 2022 with the idea of giving a bit more time for restrictions to be lifted and more developments worthy of recommendation to be identified.

If you have any suggestions of buildings or civic projects that would merit an award or commendation, please email Tim Lee and we will look at adding them to the list for 2022. In the meantime the APC will be reviewing the judging criteria for the awards which would benefit from a refresh to make sure the awards stay relevant in the twenty first century

Redhill Committee – Pippa Martin

Since my last report in November 2021 we have two new members on the Committee.

Today April 12th we are celebrating, with a heavy fall of spring snow, the partial lifting of Lockdown restrictions with the re-opening of non-essential shops, sports facilities and gyms. It has been pleasing to see the return of students to school and colleges and their happy faces returning to the streets. Many businesses in Redhill have continued to trade during Lockdown and the Belfry has provided an essential core, always remaining clean and well-staffed. The market stalls have also provided a cheerful and colourful asset to the town centre.

The Harlequin theatre which has been open to provide Covid tests has issued a new website with an interesting programme of events. The committee commented that since the theatre received money from the Borough for advertising there should be more prominent displays of future events in the town centre. There have been the usual problems of parking and traffic jams, together with disruptions from building works in Marketfield Way and mains water digging in the High Street. Marketfield Way has now reopened. Parking on the pavement in the service road at Sainsburys and Clarendon Road: restrictions have not been enforced.

The Committee had requested the publication of the Borough's plans for Marketfield Way to be displayed on the hoardings put up by De Vinci, the building contractors, around the construction site. This has not happened but you can sign up for a Newsletter on the Council's web site. At the Reigate Society Zoom meeting in February one committee member asked what the Borough's vision for Redhill is. The Committee is concerned that Redhill cannot sustain too many high rise residential buildings without the means of providing the required social facilities or a pleasant and beautiful environment fit for the 21st century. Nobel House is to have replacement cladding and at present this has affected the sale of apartments.

The trees and shrubbery planted at the front of the Picture House apartments are attractive but we need a great deal more planting to keep the pollution levels down in the centre. It was suggested that climbing plants on the Sainsburys building would reduce solar glare.

The plans for the refurbishment of Shrewsbury Court Independent Hospital have finally been passed.

The Salvation Army Citadel has been deemed a Community Asset after a petition signed by local residents. The legal department of the Salvation Army has put it on the market for £750,000. One of the signatories to the petition, experienced in this field, suggested that with community restrictions this figure was too high. It has been suggested that the community might buy it for use as a café, crèche, venue for concerts, exhibitions etc.

John McNally, borough conservation officer, held an excellent seminar on the conservation sites in Redhill & Merstham on 26th March. St.Johns, Shaws Corner, Redstone Hill, Merstham, Redhill Centre & Linkfield St.

The rough sleeper who has been living opposite Dolmans, the pharmacist, for several months has moved on. The Baptist Chapel in Shrewsbury Road provides comfort to sundry homeless souls on a regular basis.

The East Surrey Hospital has been under considerable pressure during the recent lock down. The medical and administrative staff have had to deal with a very heavy case load and the Army were an additional support in the more critical days.

The Surrey Mirror reported on April 8th that Michael Wilson, the Chief Executive of East Surrey Hospital, is to retire in the autumn. He has been at the helm for 11 years. He transformed a struggling Trust to an "outstanding healthcare provider".

The vaccination programme in the borough has been extremely efficient, with many people already receiving their second vaccines. It is remarkable that a high proportion of the staff have been volunteers.

Redhill Committee – (continued)

There is to be a Reigate Society Zoom meeting on the 17th May on the Green Belt. It is noteworthy that on March 1, 2018, in the Letters section of the Surrey Mirror, Harry Ingram and Philippa Martin of the Redhill Committee wrote under the heading “Green belt policy needs tightening”! On April 12, 2018, Sir Andrew Motion, vice-president of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, wrote to the Times under the title “stampede to build homes threatens the rights of locals.

The unauthorised use of the taxiway as a hard runway at Redhill aerodrome was discussed at a council planning meeting. Steve McKenna secured agreement that if there were ever a change of use of the aerodrome the taxiway would have to be dug up thus ensuring that developers could not claim that it was a brownfield site. There has been a suggestion that as Redhill aerodrome is of great historical importance to the aviation world there should be a national museum created there.

On September 13th, 2021 the subject under discussion of Reigate Society meeting is to be REDHILL. It is unclear at the moment whether it should be a zoom meeting or a full scale meeting attended by the public. Dr Gerry Moss will give the historical background and hopefully a landscape manager, recently moved to Redhill will give a modern view of the town.

Transport – Bruce Healey

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a large reduction in the use of public transport which has resulted in reductions in the frequency of trains, buses and planes. The 3 trains per hour service on the North Downs line to Reading was introduced in September only to be withdrawn by recent events. The refurbishment of Gatwick Airport Station (due to complete in September 2023) has also caused a reduction of service. Currently the half hourly Monday to Saturday service frequency service from Reigate to Victoria has been retained. The changing commuting pattern means that some services might not be reinstated for some time if at all, although leisure travel may well return strongly. Extensive work at Victoria is likely to cause disruption to rail services through Redhill Station to London until the end of next year.

The sustained lobbying of Network Rail (NR) regarding the level crossing over many years is at last showing some results. NR had previously stated that any changes to the signalling to reduce the time the gates are closed for eastbound trains would be prohibitively expensive owing to the need to bring Reigate signalbox up to the latest signalling standard. They suggested that the time to perform this work was when (or if) the Reigate platform 3 work went ahead. During the consultation on Platform 3, it came as a double surprise that Reigate signalbox would use the current standard signalling equipment to save money and that the level crossing was not part of the scope. The crossing proved to be one of the subjects about which most questions were asked with our President Nicholas Owen, Crispin Blunt MP and Cllr Gareth Owen all adding their weight. NR have now commissioned a report into the level crossing possibly as a separate project. The result of this is expected soon.

The annual road pot hole problem seems not to be as bad as usual so far, possibly owing to the lower traffic levels. Statistics show that the average vehicle fuel consumption has worsened over the last few years. Although similar cars are now more fuel efficient, the public are buying ever larger vehicles. When it comes to motoring, it seems that the public are not interested in helping the environment.

Website – Bruce Healey

The website headers have been revamped. The home page now has a slide show of local scenes plus a number of new items of interest. Website address is www.reigatesociety.org.uk

The number of Facebook 'likes' continues to grow slowly but steadily.

CORPORATE MEMBERS

All phone numbers prefixed 01737 and addresses Reigate unless otherwise stated.

Adam's Gallery www.adamsgallery.co.uk	42a High Street, Reigate RH2 9AT	225677	Art gallery
Care Homes of Distinction Ltd www.carehomesofdistinction.com	Wray Park, 55 Alma Road RH2 0DN	248245	Care Homes & property development
Crow Watkin www.crowwatkin.co.uk	14 Bell Street RH2 7BE	245886	Independent estate agents, surveyors & valuers
Dunottar School www.dunottarschool.com	High Trees Road RH2 7EL	761945	Independent secondary school
East Surrey College www.esc.ac.uk	Claremont Road, Gatton Point RH1 2JX	772611	College of Further Education
Franchise Accounting Services Ltd franchiseaccounting.co.uk	48 Nutfield Road, Merstham RH1 3EP	649839	Accountancy
Micklefield School www.micklefieldschool.co.uk	10 Somers Road RH2 9DU	242615	Independent preparatory school for boys & girls aged 2 1/2 to 11
Rayners Commercial www.raynerscommercial.com	14a Bell Street RH2 7BG	222835	Chartered Surveyors and Commercial Property Agents
Reigate Architects reigatearchitects.co.uk	24 Holmesdale Road RH2 0BQ	243540	Architecture & sustainability
Reigate Grammar School www.reigategrammar.org	Reigate Road RH2 0QS	222231	Grammar School
Reigate Heath Golf Club www.reigateheathgc.com	Reigate Heath RH2 8QR	226793	Heathland golf course
Reigate Priory Cricket Club www.reigatepriorycc.co.uk	Park Lane RH2 8JX	244477	Cricket club with senior & junior sections
Reigate Priory School www.reigate-priory.co.uk	Bell Street RH2 7RL	245065	Junior school
Royal Albert & Alexandra School www.raa-school.co.uk	Gatton Park RH2 0TW	649050	Boarding school for boys & girls aged 7 to 18
Skin Architects www.skin-architects.co.uk	32 Howard Road RH2 7JE	210457	Chartered Architects
Skipton Building Society www.skipton.co.uk	43 Church Street RH2 0AE	245716	Local building society (mortgages & investments)
Stanton Construction www.stantonconstruction.co.uk	1 Castlefield Road RH2 0SA	227430	Development & construction service, public & commercial sectors
Stentor Music Co. Ltd www.stentor-music.com	Albert Road North RH2 9EZ	240226	Manufacturers and distributors of musical instruments
Stoneman Funeral Service www.stonemanfunerals.co.uk	Doran Court, Reigate Road RH1 6AZ	763456	Funeral directors & memorial craftsmen
TWM Solicitors LLP www.twmsolicitors.com	40 West Street RH2 9BT	221212	Solicitors
White & Sons www.whiteandsons.co.uk	24 High Street RH2 9AY	222600	Independent estate agents, surveyors and valuers

Membership Application

Annual Membership Rates: Individual£10.00
Family£15.00
Corporate£30.00

I/We apply for Individual Family Corporate

membership of the Reigate Society (tick as applicable)

Name(s): Mr Mrs Miss Ms Other

.....
Address

..... Postcode

Email: Telephone.....

I enclose a cheque for £..... payable to The Reigate Society

I enclose a completed Banker's Order Form

I have paid by direct transfer to: The Reigate Society

HSBC Reigate Sort code: 40-38-10 Account number 70690538

(use your surname and form number as reference)

Name of person completing form:.....

Signature: Date:

Please send completed form with cheque (if chosen payment method) to:
Robert Bogin, Townsend House, 64 Church Street, Reigate RH2 0SP
or scanned by email to reigatesociety@gmail.com

DATA PROTECTION NOTICE

Payment of your annual subscription establishes a contract between yourself and the Reigate Society. We will provide regular Newsletters delivered to you by email or paper version to your address. You are entitled to attend all meetings of the Society including the Annual General Meeting and the Society will advise you of all such meetings.

In order to fulfil our obligations to our members, the Registrar of the Society maintains an electronic database of members' home addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses plus a record of annual subscription payments. This file is password controlled and all prudent security measures are in place against outside access. These details are not passed to any third party nor are they used for any purpose other than to fulfil our contractual obligations to our Members. Details of payments received are held by the Treasurer of the Society in an electronic file. This file is password controlled and all prudent security measures are in place against outside access. These details are held in order to reconcile payments received against membership records. The details of any member who does not pay their annual subscription within the membership year in question will be deleted from the Membership database within three months of the end of that membership year and the contract between the Member and the Society will end.

If any member has any questions concerning the above or wishes to end their contract with the Society, they should advise the Registrar in writing or by email message.

Questions will also be answered by the Registrar, Robert Bogin, on 07989-408834.